

CLAIMS PENDING

1. (withdrawn) A recording medium for ink jet printing comprising:
a substrate coated with at least one ink receiving layer;
and
at least one protective layer, wherein said protective layer is on top of said ink receiving layer and comprises a particulate polymer having film forming temperatures between 60 to 140° and a binder.
2. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said substrate is selected from the group consisting of paper, transparency materials, fabrics, transfer materials and polymeric substrates.
3. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said paper is selected from the group consisting of high wet-strength paper, label grade paper, treated paper, pigmented paper, resin coated paper, polyethylene coated paper and synthetic paper.
4. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 2, wherein said polymeric substrates are selected from the group consisting of cellulose acetates, polyesters, poly(propylene) and poly(vinyl chloride).
5. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said ink receiving layer includes at least one binder selected from the group consisting of gelatin, poly(vinyl alcohol), poly(vinyl pyrrolidone), carbohydrates, gums, treated carbohydrates, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose, acrylic polymers, and mixtures thereof.
6. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said ink receiving layer comprises poly(vinyl alcohol) having a degree of hydrolysis of at least 88%.
7. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said ink receiving layer further includes one or more additives selected from the group consisting of

inorganic pigments, fillers, silica, alumina, clays, calcium carbonate, dye fixing agents, cationic polymers, surfactants, cross linking agents, optical brighteners and light stabilizers.

8. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said binder in said protective layer is selected from the group consisting of poly(vinyl alcohol), copolymers of poly(vinyl alcohol), gelatin, poly(vinyl pyrrolidone), carbohydrates, gums, treated carbohydrates, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose, acrylic polymers, and mixtures thereof.
9. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 8, wherein said binder is poly(vinyl alcohol) having a degree of hydrolysis of at least 90%.
10. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said particulate polymer has a particle size between 1 and 50 μ m.
11. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said particulate polymer is selected from the group consisting of low density polyethylene and copolymers of ethylene with ethylenically unsaturated monomers.
12. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said ethylenically unsaturated monomers comprise acrylic acid.
13. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said particulate polymer comprises low density polyethylene spherical beads having an average diameter of approximately 12 μ m.
14. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said particulate polymer comprises spherical beads of a 7% acrylic acid/polyethylene copolymer having an average diameter of approximately 10 μ m.

15. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said protective layer has a coating weight from 15 to 40 gm⁻².
16. (withdrawn) The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said protective layer further comprises additives selected from the group consisting of surfactants, cross linking agents, aldehydes, boric acid and divalent metallic cations.
17. (currently amended) An ink jet printing method comprising the steps of:
 - 1) printing on to a receiving medium which comprises a substrate coated with at least one ink receiving layer and at least one upper protective layer which comprises polymeric particles having film forming temperatures between 60 to 140 °C and a binder; and
 - 2) heating the printed image to form a stable image-protecting coating[-]; wherein said printed image is substantially retained within the upper protective layer.
18. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said ink receiving layer and said protective layer are coated on said substrate simultaneously.
19. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said protective layer is coated as an aqueous formulation on top of said ink receiving layer.
20. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated under pressure to form the protective coating.
21. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated by passing through a laminator.
22. (original) A method according to claim 21, wherein an inert sheet is in contact with said protective layer and passed through said laminator.

23. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet includes release papers or liners, silicone release liners, casting films and papers, and polyester films.
24. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet is used to impart a high gloss, embossed pattern or security symbol to the final image.
25. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is polyvinyl alcohol.
26. (previously amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein said polymeric particles comprises low density polyethylene.
27. (previously amended) A method according to claim 26, wherein said polymeric particles comprises low density polyethylene spherical beads having an average diameter of approximately 12 μ m.
28. (previously amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein said polymeric particles comprise spherical beads of a 7% acrylic acid/polyethylene copolymer having an average diameter of approximately 10 μ m.
29. (previously amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein the inks used to print the image on said receiving layer are selected from the groups consisting of aqueous inks and inks based on organic solvents.
30. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is a hydrophilic binder.